REMARKS

As recited in Claim 1, an embodiment of the present invention is a method of enhancing at least one performance property of an aqueous polymer dispersion comprising at least one water-soluble ionic compound, which comprises removing at least 50 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound from the polymer dispersion, and adding at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid.

As described in the specification beginning at page 1, line 17, the action of water on an adhesive film leads to an unwanted clouding which is called water whitening, which clouding is known to be attributable to the presence of water-soluble ionic compounds in the adhesive film. The specification then describes that in EP-A-571069, which is from the same patent family of Wood, *infra*, it is recommended that these ionic compounds be removed from polymer dispersions by treatment with an ion exchange resin. However, although the resulting polymer dispersions then have an improved water whitening behavior, other of their performance properties, such as poor wettability on customary substrates such as polymer films or silicone papers, result.

The rejections of Claims 1-13, 15-18, 20-21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by either of US 5,286,843 or US 5,536,811 (Wood), as evidenced by US 4,940,732 (Pastorino et al), are respectfully traversed. (The above two patents to Wood are related as parent application and divisional application, respectively, and thus have identical disclosure.) In addition to the discussion of Wood above, the Examiner notes that in Example 1 thereof, a product known as Emcol® 4500 surfactant is used to make a pressure sensitive adhesive formulation therein. The Examiner relies on Pastorino et al as disclosing that Emcol® 4500 is a sodium dioctyl suffosuccinate (column 4, lines 4-5).

Wood evidenced by Pastorino et al neither anticipates nor otherwise renders the presently-claimed method unpatentable. The pressure sensitive adhesive formulation of

Example 1 is then subjected to deionization in Example 3, according to Wood's invention. Such deionization would result in removal of the Emcol® 4500. Clearly the resultant product would be different from that of presently Claims 10-20. Nor could Wood evidenced by Pastorino et al possibly anticipate or otherwise render unpatentable present method Claims 1-9 and 21-23, since Wood neither discloses nor suggests addition of a material such as Emcol® 4500 following deionization therein.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 10-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, WO 02/10306 (Kleiner et al), is respectfully traversed.[1] Kleiner et al discloses a pressure sensitive adhesive composition made by emulsion polymerization, which emulsion polymer may further comprise a surfactant which comprises, based on the total weight of the dry polymer, from about 0.5% to about 1.5% by weight of sodium dialkyl sulfosuccinate, from about 0.5 to about 1.5% by weight of a particular sulfosuccinamate, and up to about 4% by weight of ammonium or sodium salts of sulfated alkylphenoxy poly(ethyleneoxy) ethanol (page 3, lines 4-9).

Kleiner et al neither anticipates nor otherwise renders the present claims unpatentable. The aqueous polymer dispersion of the present claims would necessarily exclude the required tetrasodium (N-dicarboxy-alkyl) N-alkyl sulfosuccinamate of Kleiner et al. Clearly, it would not have been obvious to exclude a required component. *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984) **(copy enclosed)**. See also MPEP 2143.01.

New Claim 25 is separately patentable, since it necessarily excludes the sulfosuccinamate and the ammonium or sodium salts of sulfated alkylphenoxy poly(ethyleneoxy) ethanol of Kleiner et al by virtue of removing substantially all of the water-soluble ionic compound herein from the polymer dispersion, prior to adding the at least

[1] While the Examiner refers to the reference as Foreman et al, it is noted that Kleiner is the first-listed inventor.

one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid. Kleiner et al neither discloses nor suggests the use of a sodium dialkyl sulfosuccinate alone therein.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Wood in view of US 3,964,955 [sic, US 5,879,663] (Nakabayashi et al), is respectfully traversed. Even if diafiltration were used as the deionization mechanism of Wood, the result would still not be the presently-claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully call the Examiner's attention to the fact that document AA was not initialed on the Form PTO-1449 attached to the Office Action, which form corresponds to the Information Disclosure Statement filed August 10, 2006. **Submitted herewith** is another copy of said form. The Examiner is respectfully requested to initial next to document AA, and include a copy of the initialed form with the next Office communication.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the presently-pending claims in this application are now in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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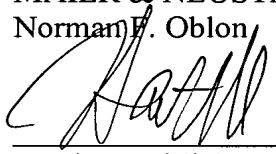

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